

RESEARCH ON LANGUAGE TEACHING IN A CROSS-BORDER CONTEXT: ANALYSIS OF THE PROFESSIONAL LANGUAGE TEACHER PROFILE

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- **ABSTRACT:** In the process of building teachers' professional identity, social and professional practices play an important role. Those practices are, however, affected by the context in which they are immersed. For the aim of this paper, we locate our research on the cross-border region Brazil-Peru-Bolivia to analyse teachers' professional profile. The purpose of our analysis is to identify elements of plurilingual competence in their professional profile. It will allow us to reflect on the potentialities offered by a cross-border context in the process of building a professional identity of teachers from the perspective of plurilingual education. We locate our research in the field of Didactic of Language and Literature to address key concepts related to plurilingual education. We have identified that teachers are aware of the potentiality of the context and they develop pedagogical practices that contribute to the development of plurilingual competence.
- **KEYWORDS:** Professional identity. Cross-border contexts. Language teacher. Plurilingual education.

Introduction

The contexts bestowed to us every day are more plural and in literature the new emerging terms seek to express or signify all this plural reality. In the case of the words "multilingual" and "multicultural", the studies that address these concepts define them as the coexistence of different languages and cultures in the same territory and as the knowledge that individuals have of these languages and cultures (EUROPEAN COUNCIL, 2002; BEACCO; BYRAM, 2007; PIÑEIRO; GUILLÉN; VEZ, 2010; NUSSBAUM; UNAMUNO, 2014). Although under these terms underlies the idea of its preservation, especially of those minority languages, because it's considered that

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each of them has its proper value and importance; from our point of view, they are very static concepts, as the interaction between languages and cultures is not taken into consideration.

Likewise, other terms arise in the European context, such as: “plurilingualism”, “pluricultural” and “plurilingual competence”. Plurilingualism is conceived, on the one hand, as an ability of the individual to make use of several languages and, on the other, as a value to live in society. Under this concept lies the idea of mobilization, dynamism, which requires the individual to develop specific skills (multilingual competence) that will allow the use of the different languages and cultures that make up the linguistic repertoire in an intercultural action. In this way, the learning of other languages is conceived as more efficient. In addition, this process is also reflective as the individual is aware of the value that languages have, affecting the way of interacting with other people. The promotion of plurilingualism is one of the measures adopted by the Council of Europe to address the diversity of languages and cultures.

The cultural-linguistic plurality is even more evident in the border contexts where the interaction between individuals is constant. In these spaces, complex relations processes are shaped, marked by their own dynamism (ARRIAGA-RODRÍGUEZ, 2012).

These places, essentially multilingual and multicultural, are advantageous for learning languages as people are in contact with different languages and cultures. In this way, the context itself affects language teachers’ classroom practices. Therefore, we start from the premise that language teachers from border contexts are developing translinguistic and transcultural practices that make up their professional identity.

Given this situation, we focus on the language teacher who is in a cross-border context. We relate the term cross-border with the concepts of border and frontier, considering them as socially constructed spaces. These are unique areas built by the very individuals that constitute and characterize them to the same extent. Discontinuous but equally complementary social practices characterize these spaces.

In the process of building its professional identity, the teacher incorporates elements aimed to enhance language learning in students. The purpose of this study is to identify those elements of plurilingual education that underlie the profile of the language teacher that performs in a cross-border context. To do this, we investigate the perceptions of language teachers from schools in the cross-border region, merged in the following locations: State of Acre (Assis Brazil, Brazil), the Department of Pando (Cobija, Bolivia) and the Province of Madre de Dios (Iñapari, Peru).

To have knowledge of this profile will allow us to reflect on the potentialities offered by the cross-border context for the construction of a professional identity of the teacher, in the perspective of plurilingual education.

Theoretical Framework

Teaching languages and cultures has always been a challenge because it is not only about transmitting mere linguistic structures to students, but also about disclosing other ways of asserting and observing the world. And in the present day, this challenge is even more demanding because it means going beyond showing something to someone, giving examples or having someone learn something.

The contexts, increasingly pluralistic every day, require from the professionals, who are dedicated to the teaching of languages, multiple competences to attend students and solve problems that arise in the classroom, such as intolerant attitudes based on superficial views and stereotypes of students when they come into contact with new languages and cultures, either in formal learning contexts or in a given social context. Language teachers are building a professional identity that characterizes them. The reception of academic training highlights this professional identity as well as the context in which they act. In plural contexts, such as cross-border contexts, identity is even more complex.

Hall, Silva and Louro (2006, p.24) states that posing a definition of identity is a somewhat difficult task because it is a very complex concept. However, it leads us to a definition of identity understood as a “mobile celebration”, interim, variable, and problematic. For this author, the identity of the modern people has been fragmented; if earlier they were “fully unified and coherent, now they have already become fully decentered”.

As mentioned by Hall, Silva and Louro (2006) and Bauman (2005), identities have been fragmented according to social changes. For the previous authors, these changes are the responsible for the decentering of the subject and the identity crisis of modern people.

Regarding professional identity, Balduzzi and Egle (2010, p.67) observe that its construction is a dynamic and complex process that begins in the academic formation and extends throughout the trajectory and professional performance. For these authors, in this process the individual “[...] defines itself in relation to its work space and a collective professional group of reference, that is, in terms of occupation, trade or profession and with respect to those who exercise it.”

This professional identity is built both individually and collectively, or as explained by Bauman (2005), is given from the formation of one plus the other, that is, in relation; they are dynamic historical constructions located within a social context and are non-existent outside it.

Morales Ortega (2016, p.20) points out that identities are “created in a specific time and space”. For this reason, this author states that it is important “[...] to understand the spaces and the social context in which individuals relate to each other and understand the effects that these historical changes produce in the construction of individual and collective identities.”

The context in which we insert this research, which we call cross-bordered, marked by its dynamism, it's conceived as a space that is beyond one or another place on the border. It is the context in which everyone is mutually involved, recognized, valued, where they meet, and cooperate, share, and generate trans-linguistic and cross-cultural practices.

In the specific case of the cross-border region of the State of Acre, located on the three-frontier border Brazil-Peru-Bolivia, lands previously belonging to the Bolivian territory, it is the last State incorporated into the Brazilian territory after a series of diplomatic agreements and confrontations between Brazil and Bolivia that ends after the victory of Brazil in 1903 with the Acre War.

The cities located in the border areas present very peculiar socio-cultural characteristics due to the encounter of native Brazilian, Bolivian, and Peruvian languages and cultures. In addition, other foreign cultures make up this mosaic in virtue of being this area a path to the Pacific and a free trade zone.

Currently, Portuguese and Spanish are the languages spoken by most inhabitants. However, we must consider the other languages that circulate in these spaces: the *Portuñol*¹ which is a variety shared by Brazilians, Bolivians, and Peruvians; English which is taught as mandatory in Secondary Education in the border schools; indigenous languages such as *Quechua* and *Aymara*; the native language of the *Cavineña*² that is offered to the students of Bolivian schools; and also other indigenous languages spoken by smaller number of native people *Manchineri*³ located in the Brazilian region of the threefold frontier.

We believe that the teaching of languages in this cross-border context, where there is a great mobilization of languages and cultures, should integrate plurilingual education approaches through classroom practices oriented towards the development of the plurilingual competence of students.

That is, educational approaches oriented to favor the encounter with the other, to consider the different languages and cultures, to recognize the value of each one and to understand from the differences. An approach to teaching languages in this perspective is, from our point of view, more equitable and more effective because it considers the different languages that make up the linguistic repertoire of individuals who move in this cross-border context.

¹ Portuñol is a contact language used by speakers of Portuguese and Spanish who are in the border regions of Brazil with Spanish-speaking countries.

² The Cavineña language belongs to the Tacana linguistic family and it is one of the original languages of Bolivia. Its teaching becomes mandatory in the school curriculum of the Bolivian departments of Beni and Pando: when the educational reform in Bolivia, was carried out in the year 2010, it recognized this country as intracultural, intercultural and plurilingual.

³ The Manchineri are native people who live in the Brazilian territory located in the border with Peru and Bolivia. They belong to the Aruak linguistic family.

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the construction of a professional identity of the language teacher that is able to attend to a plurilingual education approach. To do this, we investigate their professional profile through their teaching conceptions and, by identifying elements of plurilingual competence that underlie this profile. With the preceding in mind, we establish the following objectives:

- To identify the elements of plurilingual competence that underlies the management of one's practice and commitment as a teacher.
- To identify the elements of plurilingual competence that underlies the management of the integration of the classroom space and the school community.

To identify the elements of the plurilingual competence of the language teacher professional profile that underlie the management of the aforementioned elements, we have chosen to explore the perceptions of the teaching staff adopting a methodological approach that situates it within the interpretive qualitative paradigm.

We situate ourselves in a qualitative paradigm with the purpose of understanding a reality from the perceptions of the subjects involved in the teaching-learning process of languages. This option is supported by the idea of Flick (2015), when pointing out that qualitative research allows us to approach the external world through the analysis of the perceptions and experiences of individuals as these occur.

For the data collection, we have designed a semi-structured interview. As a technique, the interview allows us to systematically collect information. In addition, as Kvale (2011) tells us, this type of instrument allows us to approach the reality of the informants through their own words, knowing their own perspectives.

We have considered relevant to elaborate some guiding questions, but, at the same time, give the informants greater freedom to express their perceptions and from them, formulate other questions, procedure that, according to Bisquerra (2014, p.337), "It allows to interweave themes and build a holistic and comprehensive knowledge of reality". The flexible nature of the interview has allowed us to make adjustments during its implementation, favoring the interactive process between interviewer and interviewees.

Such procedure has allowed us to collect information from teachers regarding their way of acting and perception of conflicting situations that occur in their classroom; their perceptions regarding motivation, awareness, and receptivity of students towards language learning; the use of resources to motivate learning and the promotion of autonomy in students, as well as the collaborative work among their peers.

The interviews were conducted to teachers of languages that act in the cross-border context of the threefold border between Brazil, Peru, and Bolivia. We established as criteria for inclusion of participants, the teachers who work in border schools teaching

native or foreign languages; and as exclusion criteria for teachers' informants, those who live in areas not located in border contexts and work with other disciplines outside the languages field.

Applying these criteria, we have 03 (three) language teachers as informants whom, for this case, we identify as P1, P2 and P3.

The informant, identified as P1, is bilingual (Portuguese-Spanish) whose academic career started in Peru (Fundamental and Secondary Education) and has finished in Brazil, concluding university education in Portuguese Literature at the Federal University of Acre. This informant comes from and lives in the context of action, that is, the city of Assis Brazil, Acre-Brazil.

The informant, identified as P2, is bilingual (Quechua-Spanish) proficient in the Cavineña language, all academic training carried out in Bolivian territory, with training in Communication and Language. He acts as a teacher of Spanish and Cavineña language. He comes from an area external to the community of action; nevertheless, he lives for more than a decade in Cobija, Department of Pando-Bolivia.

The informant, identified as P3, also bilingual in Quechua and Spanish, received training in Peruvian territory, graduated in Communication and Language and, currently, exerts as a Spanish language teacher. This informant comes from an area external to the community of action and, recently lives in the school community of Iñapari, Madre de Dios-Peru.

For the analysis of data, we have relied on the contributions of Bisquerra (2014), Batthyány and Cabrera (2011), and Bardin (1986). We have chosen to perform content analysis, defined by these authors as a research technique where the data are described objectively and systematically.

Drawn from these two axes, we define four categories: reflection of the practice itself, commitment as a teacher, interaction established with students and involvement in the school community.

For the definition of the first category, reflection of the practice itself, we have considered the reflective practice that Perronoud (2007, p. 41) places in the profession of teaching. This author argues that reflexive practice is a commitment that is based on the one hand in a "pragmatic pole", through the development of attitude, and on the other hand in a "pole of identity" through the formation of a specific identity.

Therefore, under the category "reflection of the practice itself", we collect those statements that give render of the reflections on its own practice, that is, what teachers do and believe should be done to achieve their teaching objectives in terms of appropriation of linguistic and cultural elements, awakening the interest and motivation of students to learn languages and intervene in situations of conflict in the classroom.

For the definition of the second category, commitment as a teacher, we have considered the notion of commitment and involvement, which Traver Marti (2011) places in the zone of the characterization of the committed teacher with quality education and social justice service.

Traver Marti (2011, p.95), citing Gale and Densmore (2007), argues that teachers must play a political role, towards the promotion of “radical democracy, critical disposition towards society and political activism.”

Therefore, under the category, commitment as a teacher, we gather the statements that render those practices of teachers aimed at promoting student learning from a conscious behavior where good social practices prime.

For the definition of the third category, interaction established with students, we have considered the interaction between teachers and students in a pedagogical context that Artavia (2005) places as the relational-communicative-affective aspect. These aspects are considered by this author as milestones for the integral development of the individual.

According to Richards (2005), it is the teacher-student relationship that is one of the most important interactions in the school context, given its bidirectional nature that includes a process of mutual involvement.

In this way, under the category, interaction established with students, we collect statements that give render of the aspects related to the capacity of the language teacher to interact with the students and their capacity to create bonds that allow to establish a relationship of trust, appreciation, consideration for the other, tolerance and respect.

For the definition of the fourth category, involvement in the school community, we have considered the notion of collaborative work that Fernández Tilve and Malvar Méndez (1999) acknowledge as an enhancing element for professional development. These are deliberate practices oriented towards the achievement of common goals, practices shaped by professional dialogue and commitment.

Therefore, under the category of involvement in the school community, we gather those statements that renders for the commitment of the teacher and their availability for interaction with the members from the school community, as well as the availability to collaborate with peers and organize activities in school.

For these categories we established subcategories of analysis guided by the systematic process of axial coding (STRAUSS; CORBIN, 1990). The criterion used to establish these subcategories has been the separation of the units of analysis deriving from the documentary corpus by organizing thematic proximity allowing us to see different dimensions within the same category. Thus, we have established the following sub categories of analysis:

Reflection of the practice itself

- Appropriation of diverse cultural-linguistic knowledge;
- Sharing of language and culture;
- Motivate students to learn languages and cultures;
- Awaken students' interest in language learning;
- Intervene in situations of conflict.

Commitment as a teacher

- Guide teaching of languages for the education of more human individuals
- Promote autonomous learning of languages.

Establish interaction with students

- Interaction with students;
- Build emotional bonds with students.

Involvement with the school community

- Participate in the activities carried out by their educational center and are involved in the problems that affect them;
- Interact and collaborate with other professionals in the educational center.

Data discussion

Regarding the category, reflection of the practice itself, the data reveal that language teachers are aware that they need to garner other languages, including those that are part of their border reality. Likewise, all the informants declare that they use their native tongue to enhance the cultural-linguistic learning of their students by making exemplifications and comparisons with the language they teach, as seen in the following declarations:⁴

*Por exemplo: ...Tive alunos peruanos aqui e em determinado conteúdo...
_Professor, isto está errado! Manifestam-se no mesmo momento... Daí tem que parar para explicar: _Não. É que o espanhol que se ensina aqui é o da Espanha. E muitas coisas diferenciam, não é a mesma coisa. Então muitas coisas na aula são assim... _ah que legal, não sabia disso. Mesmo falando espanhol há esta diversidade. [P1]⁵*

Yo soy de la cultura quechua y pues... hay algunas clases que también comparto en mi lengua originaria, aunque no me puedan entender...

⁴ The inferences presented in this article are part of the documentary *corpus* used in the research project of our Doctoral Thesis developed within the Doctoral Program in Transdisciplinary Research in Education of the University of Valladolid. We have chosen to present the inferences in the original language, in which the informant granted the interview, to avoid any alteration of meaning in the translation process.

⁵ For example: ... I have had Peruvian students here and in certain content ... _Professor this is wrong. They manifest at the same moment ... From there you must stop to explain: _No, the Spanish taught here is peninsular. And many things are different, it is not the same. So many things in the classroom are like that ... _Ah interesting, I did not know about that. Speaking the same Spanish there is this diversity. [P1]

Pero, tras que menciono... hablo en mi lengua, les hago la interpretación de lo que significa, entonces... [P2]⁶

Por ejemplo; acá... nosotros que vivimos en la frontera, necesitamos saber el portugués obligatoriamente. Yo, mi persona por ejemplo, necesito saber para poder comunicarme con otras personas de acá de la frontera y ellos también tienen esta necesidad. Por ejemplo: el inglés es algo básico que le enseñamos para que ellos puedan comunicarse con otras personas. [P3]⁷

Claro, así es siempre. Tratamos de que ellos convivan [...] Bien. Lo toma de buena manera. A veces se rien... bromean y todo. Pero... ahí están... se familiariza con esto. Están familiarizando. [P3]⁸

Likewise, the data show that teachers seek to develop in students an interest in learning languages. For them, the learning of different languages will allow students better communication with other people as well as their entry into the working world and additionally, allowing them to know about other cultures.

Por parte dos professores, de nós, colocamos sempre a importância do domínio do inglês, do espanhol... é fantástico... até para o mercado de trabalho e todo isso... Trazemos esta situação da importância de aprender esta nova língua que vai contribuir para sua vida, a diversidade cultural que ele pode conhecer através disso... [P1]⁹

O primeiro contato para colocar esta situação é o sexto ano, que é quando já vem o espanhol, e daí já trazemos esta situação da importância de aprender esta nova língua que vai contribuir para sua vida, a diversidade cultural que ele pode conhecer através disso... então... percebemos que muitos aceitam, pero ainda assim encontramos resistência. [P1]¹⁰

⁶ I am from the Quechua culture and therefore ... there are some classes that I also share in my native language, although they cannot understand me ... But, after I mention ... I speak in my language, I give them the interpretation of what it means, then ... [P2]

⁷ For example; here ... we who live in the border, we need to mandatorily know Portuguese. I, myself, for example, need to know in order to communicate with other people from the border and they also have this need. For example: English is something basic that we teach so that they can communicate with other people. [P3]

⁸ Of course, that is the way it always is. We try to make them live together [...] Well. They take it in a good way. Sometimes they laugh ... they joke and everything. But ... there they are ... familiarized with this. They are familiarizing. [P3]

⁹ On the side of the teachers, of us, we always say the importance of the proficiency of English, of Spanish ... it is fantastic... even for the employment market and all that ... We bring to the classroom this situation, of the importance of learning this new language, that will contribute to their lives, the cultural diversity that he can know through this.... [P1]

¹⁰ The first contact to place this situation is in the Sixth grade of Primary, which is when we introduce Spanish, and from there we bring this situation of the importance of learning this new language, that will contribute to their lives, the cultural diversity that he can know through that ... then ... we perceive that many accept, but even so we find resistance. [P1]

Los que vienen aquí... están aprendiendo otra cultura que es la lengua originaria cavineña... pues se aprende por su propio interés, es una necesidad para comunicarse con otras personas. [P2]¹¹

Regarding the use of resources to motivate students in their language learning, the Brazilian school teacher declares to have them and performs activities that are usually motivating:

Eu uso a música, o livro didático mesmo, há muitas coisas bacanas, levo o notebook, o data show e coloco situações ... dependendo do conteúdo para mostrar mesmo digamos...a questão das touradas, a festa Tomatina... imagens, textos assim para mostrar e eles conhecerem, porque o visual também chama a atenção, desperta curiosidade e ajuda. [P1]¹²

Enfim ... isso é através de buscar realizar aulas dinâmicas ... como eu disse ... Eu gosto de trabalhar com gincana (brincadeiras) músicas... isso é fantástico. Quando você leva uma música, explora, canta com eles, trabalha a questão gramatical ... é fundamental e eles aprendem. [P1]¹³

However, the informants located in the schools of Peru and Bolivia declare that they do not have so many resources. They also state that they have difficulties in using technological resources:

[...] los recursos materiales son los más comunes [...] no estoy preparado todavía... para utilizar internet, en el aula, hay que tener una capacitación para utilizar un medio tecnológico como red sociales... [P2]¹⁴

Finally, they recognize that the role of the language teacher is beyond being a mere transmitter of contents. They believe that they should act as mediators in conflict situations in the classroom, trying to establish a dialogue between the students to guarantee peaceful coexistence among them:

¹¹ Those who come here ... are learning another culture that is the original language of the Cavineña ... because they learn it by their own interest, it is a necessity to communicate with other people. [P2]

¹² I use music, the didactic book, there are very good things, I carry the notebook, the Data Show and I create situations ... depending on the contents ... I show the issue of the bullfights, the Tomatina party ... images, texts ... so that they know because the visual catches a lot of attention, arouses curiosity and helps. [P1]

¹³ Anyway ... that is through dynamic classes ... as I said ... I like to work with games, music ... this is fantastic. When you work on a music, sing with them, works on the grammar issue ... it is fundamental and they learn. [P1]

¹⁴ [...] the material resources are the most common [...] I am not prepared yet ... to use the internet, in the classroom, you must have training to use a technological medium such as social networks ... [P2].

O professor, na verdade, ele tem que ser mediador, analisar e procurar coibir estes tipos de situações. Em momento algum o professor tem que ser ... às vezes, passivo com esses tipos de atitudes. Porque eu, particularmente, já vivi isso. Já estudei no Peru, e de alguma forma, eu era uma vítima de preconceito também. [P1]¹⁵

Soy paralelo, lineal, entre ambos estudiantes... No... favoreciendo ni a uno ni a otro sino, pues creando una comunicación en el marco del respeto. Los estudiantes... pues... la mejor manera para poder... bueno, estar... con los estudiantes es saber escucharles también. Escuchar y saber qué es lo que piensan cada uno de ellos... y esto me llena de satisfacción, pues... que sean conscientes, que sean sinceros en el momento de conversar, de hablar o decir una verdad. [P2]¹⁶

Regarding the category, *commitment as a teacher*, the informants declare that they seek to develop in their students' skills that go beyond the learning of the language. According to them, their actions are oriented towards an approach of teaching languages where values are taken into consideration, such as the acceptance of others and the development of attitudes of respect towards diversity:

Em alguns momentos se dão estas situações de preconceitos como temos aqui, por exemplo: muitos alunos peruanos e bolivianos e se cria esta situação de não aceitar o outro como ele é. E aí o que eu coloco é que... ele sempre deve se colocar no lugar do outro... ele deve viver esta situação para ver como eles se sentiriam, não é? Mas é tratar mesmo de conscientizar a este cidadão a não reagir contra esta diversidade. Aceitar o próximo como a si mesmo. [P1]¹⁷

De certo modo, quando colocamos... hoje o ensino de línguas não é exatamente o falar, saber se expressar em espanhol ou inglês ou qualquer outro idioma... Mas que é ele, a partir do conhecimento que ele tem e o domínio desta língua, ele se comunicar com estas diversas culturas, respeitar... Hoje uma das questões que temos que mais valorizar é esta questão da cultura mesmo de cada povo, de cada.... Porque a partir do

¹⁵ The teacher, in truth, he must be a mediator, analyze and seek to inhibit these types of situations. At some point the teacher must be ... passive with those types of attitudes. Because I, particularly, have already lived that. I studied in Peru, and in some way, I was a victim of prejudice as well. [P1]

¹⁶ I am parallel, linear, between both students ... Not ... favoring neither one nor the other but creating communication within the framework of respect. The students ... well ... the best way to be able ... well, to be ... with the students is to know how to listen to them too. Listen and know what each one of them think ... and this fills me with satisfaction, well ... to be conscious, to be sincere in the moment of talking, of speaking or telling a truth. [P2]

¹⁷ At times these situations of prejudice occur, for example: we have here, many Peruvian and Bolivian students and this situation happens, not to accept the other as he is. So, what I declare is that ... he should always put himself in the place of the other ... he should live this situation to see how they would feel, isn't it? It is about creating awareness in this citizen not to react against this diversity. Accept others as yourself. [P1]

momento que você conhece isto você passa a valorizar, não é? Y você passa a entender ao outro desta forma também. [P1]¹⁸

In addition to fostering attitudes towards the other, teachers express that they seek to develop in their students' favorable attitudes to autonomous learning of languages and cultures:

Sim. Sempre coloco que devemos ter disciplina, um projeto de vida. Porque quando você planeja e você almeja um alvo, você precisa traçar planos e se esforçar para isso ... Então, eu sempre coloco esta situação, não é? Qual cidadão ele quer ser amanhã? E para isso ele terá que desenhar metas para conquistar tudo isso ... é com grande esforço e uma das situações é ele abraçar a causa e despertar o interesse, ser autodidata, ter tempo, buscar ter tempo para estudar, porque só a escola também não é suficiente ... existem outras fontes, há a internet, que ele use aplicativos de telefone, que consiga aprender. [P1]¹⁹

Enseñándoles, otorgándoles los medios por los cuales tiene que estudiar una carrera y que la carrera les va a enseñar, les va a obligar aprender otras lenguas... dándoles, mostrándoles el camino, la profesión que ellos van a tener que lograr. [P2]²⁰

Que lo practiquen. Siempre... Que lo lleven como ejemplo, para ir practicando en su vida cotidiana. Que traten de familiarizar más que todo con eso. De que vivencia a diario... A veces digo también, ¿no? A veces les digo en quechua... a diario les voy hablando. Así ellos van aprendiendo... constantemente. [P3]²¹

Regarding the category, *interactions established with students*, the data reveal that teachers seek to establish an interactive relationship between teacher and students.

¹⁸ In a way, when we place ... today, the teaching of languages is not exactly speaking, knowing how to express oneself in Spanish or English or any other language ... But it is about the knowledge and proficiency that he has of this language, to communicate with these diverse cultures, respect ... Today one of the issues we must value the most is this issue of the culture of each people, of each ... Because from the moment you know this, you happen to value, isn't it? And you happen to understand the other in this way too. [P1]

¹⁹ Yes. I always state that we must have discipline, a life project. Because when you plan and have a goal, you need to reach your plans and strive for that. So, I always put this situation, isn't it? What citizen does he want to be tomorrow? And for that he will have to set goals to achieve it ... It is with great effort. And one of the situations is to embrace the cause and awaken interest, be self-taught, have time, find time to study because only school is not enough ... there are other sources, there is the internet ... use of mobile applications. [P1]

²⁰ Teaching them, giving them the tolls by which they must study a career and that the career is going to enlighten them, will force them to learn other languages ... giving them, showing them the way, the profession they are going to have to achieve. [P2]

²¹ That they practice it ... Take it as an example, to go practicing in their daily lives. Try to familiarize yourself, more than anything, with that. As a daily experience ... Sometimes I also say that, right? Sometimes I tell them in Quechua ... I talk to them every day. So, they are learning ... constantly. [P3]

They point out that they establish communication based on dialogue and within the framework of respect, always seeking to encourage interaction with students and build affective bonds between teacher and students:

[...] Eu sou um professor que sempre busco atuar com discernimento e através do diálogo com meus alunos. [P1]²²

Pues a mi parecer... el diálogo. El diálogo entre estudiantes y profesor es lo primero. Lo que hago es, primeramente, antes del inicio de la gestión, es realizar una conversación amena con los estudiantes... y los estudiantes entre estudiantes, para que se puedan conocer a sí mismo, pueda interactuar sobre su diario vivir... [P2]²³

Bueno... Yo... tratarme de adecuar a la realidad de ellos. Tratar de ver... yo también ponerme en su posición... de ellos. Ver de qué manera... ¿no? Comprenderlos. Porque ellos son adolescentes y también no se les puede... como se dice: reprenderlos. Tratar de ponerme en su lugar y tratar de entenderlos... pero no dejar que sobrepasen en algunos términos... Buscando la amistad. Ser amigo de ellos... bueno... [P3]²⁴

Regarding the category, *involvement in the school community*, the informants declare that they do participate in the activities carried out by their school. As they express, they participate in educational school projects aimed on tackling prejudice. They also act in the coordination of their schools, as seen in the following statements:

E isso aí, por exemplo, em sala de aula, trato de amenizar muito, mesmo porque aqui muitos estudantes, por exemplo, vêm do Peru desde a pré-escola e quando não é trabalhado... a escola até desenvolveu um projeto sobre preconceitos nesta situação, porque tem o indígena também, que é vítimas desta situação ... [P1]²⁵

Y no sé si usted ha dado cuenta de que en algunas aulas no tenemos carpetas (se refiere a mesas y sillas)... nosotros hemos tenido que venir

²² ... I am a teacher who always seeks to act with discernment and through dialogue with my students. [P1]

²³ Well, in my opinion ... dialogue. The dialogue between students and teacher comes first. What I do is, first, before begin managing, it is to make a pleasant conversation with the students ... and the students among students, so that they can know themselves, they can interact about their daily life ... [P2]

²⁴ Well ... I ... try to adapt to their reality. Try to see ... I also put myself in their position ... of them. See which way ... right? Understand them Because they are teenagers and they also cannot be ... as they say: reprehend them. Try to put myself in their place and try to understand them ... but do not let them exceed in some terms ... Looking for friendship. Be friends with them ... well ... [P3]

²⁵ In the classroom I try to entertain a lot ... even because many students here, come from Peru, since elementary education and when we do not work ... the school has even developed a project about prejudices in this situation, because there is also the indigenous, who are the victims of this situation ... [P1]

a clavar las carpetas... recoger pedazos por pedazos para que puedan los alumnos estudiar. [P3]²⁶

Furthermore, the data reveal that teachers interact and collaborate with their peers in the planning of didactic sequences, either with teachers in the languages area or of other subjects:

Geralmente os de línguas têm estas trocas de ideias, trocamos diferentes pontos de vista onde colocamos a melhor forma de trabalhar determinados conteúdos. [P1]²⁷

A inicio de gestión tenemos una reunión... ya de planificación. Y esta planificación consiste en que cada uno de los profesores aporta ideas para la planificación que se va a llevar a cabo durante todo el año [...] entonces... sí hay una comunicación entre los profesores, una coordinación para plantear las actividades y presentar en una fecha determinada. [P2]²⁸

Sí. Nosotros trabajamos... primero tenemos que hacer nuestra diversificación curricular, ¿no? Y con eso nosotros tratamos... Yo, por ejemplo, en mi área puedo tratar sobre lenguas... a veces el profesor de Artes que trabaja en otras áreas más que contextualizamos con nuestra área. Tenemos que trabajar... acogernos a eso. Todos nos juntamos, nos reunimos... que es lo que vamos a tratar, ¿no? El tema y de qué manera... y así trabajamos. [P3]²⁹

According to these professionals, collective work is conceived as important because everyone shares knowledge, which allows them to learn with their co-workers. This statement is evidenced in the following statement:

E com esse trabalho mais coletivo é bom porque temos aqui um professor que é peruano e trabalha com a língua espanhola ... Isso é ... e para quem é daqui tem a oportunidade de aprender mais.. assim

²⁶ And I do not know if you have noticed that in some classrooms we do not have folders (it refers to tables and chairs) ... we have had to come to nail the folders ... collect pieces by pieces so that students can study. [P3]

²⁷ Generally, those of languages have these changes of ideas, we change different points of view, we state the best way to work certain contents. [P1]

²⁸ At the beginning of the school year we have a meeting ... for planning. And this planning consists in, each teacher contributes with ideas for the planning that will be carried out during the whole school year [...] so ... yes, there is communication between teachers, a coordination to pose activities and submit in a determined date. [P2]

²⁹ Yes. We work ... first we must do our curricular diversification, right? And with that we try ... I, for example, in my area can talk about languages ... sometimes the Arts teacher, who works in other areas, which we contextualize with our area. We must work ... embrace that. We all meet, we get together ... what we are going to address, isn't it? The topic and in what way ... and so we work. [P3]

como ele tem algumas dúvidas ... mas é bem legal ... aprendemos bastante. [P1]³⁰

Results and conclusions

The results of the analysis reveal that language teachers in the cross-border context are aware of the potential of their own context in the construction of their professional identity. The fact that they take advantage of the cultural-linguistic plurality of their classrooms to enhance the learning of their students, mobilizing their linguistic repertoires and making them aware of the importance of learning languages, shows pedagogical practices oriented towards plurilingual education approaches.

Although teachers share with the students the native tongues present in the classroom, it is not common the use of practices, which undertake the analysis and comparison of different languages, especially those that are not part of this cultural-linguistic reality.

Also, it is noticeable that teachers develop classroom practices oriented to the construction of values, for example when they intervene as mediators to solve the conflicts that arise in the classroom. Under this practice, there is an interest for an education that contributes to respectful and tolerant students, aware of the value that other has, accepting this diversity in a positive way.

These initiatives are essential to promote the development of the plurilingual competence of students, since this competence requires not only a capacity to make use of the linguistic repertoire, but also a capacity to “good living” with others, as indicated in the documents of the Council of Europe which addresses the concept of plurilingualism.

Regarding the management for the integration of language classroom and the school community, we can conclude that the profile of the language teacher in the cross-border context is characterized by the relational nature of this professional, when aware that his work is conditioned by the relationships established in the classroom, between teachers and students, as well as among their peers in the school community.

Research contribution

This study has allowed us to verify that there are elements of plurilingual education in the professional profile of a group of language teachers who place their practices in a cross-border context. Identifying these features in their profile has helped us to understand the actions they carry out in the classroom from the perspective of a

³⁰ And with that more collective work, it is good, because we have a teacher here who is Peruvian and he works the Spanish language ... And for those of us here, we have an opportunity to learn more ... just as he has some doubts ... but it is very good ... we learn a lot. [P1]

plurilingual education. In this way, this research will set basis for the reflection of the potentialities offered by the cross-border context, peculiar in its nature of super diversity, for the construction of a professional identity of teachers who attend plurilingual education.

DINIZ, M.; PRIETO, P. La investigación sobre la enseñanza de lenguas en un contexto transfronterizo: análisis del perfil profesional docente. *Alfa*, São Paulo, v.62, n.2, p.339-356, 2018.

- *RESUMEN: En el proceso de construcción de la identidad del profesional del docente, intervienen unas prácticas sociales y profesionales en las que participa. Éstas, a su vez, se ven afectadas por el contexto en el que se encuentran inmersas. En este artículo, nos situamos en un contexto transfronterizo de la región Brasil-Perú-Bolivia para abordar el perfil profesional del docente desde el análisis de sus percepciones. La finalidad de nuestro análisis es identificar aquellos elementos de la competencia plurilingüe que subyacen a su perfil profesional docente, lo que nos permitirá reflexionar sobre las potencialidades que ofrece el contexto transfronterizo para la construcción de una identidad profesional en la perspectiva de la educación plurilingüe. Nos situamos en el ámbito de la Didáctica de las Lenguas y la Literatura para abordar unos conceptos claves relacionados con la educación plurilingüe. Hemos identificado que los docentes son conscientes de las potencialidades del contexto y desarrollan unas prácticas pedagógicas que favorecen el desarrollo de la competencia plurilingüe.*
- *PALABRAS-CLAVE: Identidad profesional. Contextos de frontera. Docente de lenguas. Educación plurilingüe.*

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Received on 30 August, 2017

Approved on 22 March, 2018